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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: WIESENTHAL CENTER APPEALS FOR UNGA ACTION AGAINST  
SUICIDE BOMBING

Classified By: Ambassador Khalilzad for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. BEGIN SUMMARY: Representatives of the Simon Wiesenthal Center appealed for Amb. Khalilzad's help in pushing the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to convene a special session devoted to condemning the scourge of suicide bombing. In a meeting at USUN February 26, they also expressed concern about the "Durban II" review conference, called for continued U.S. leadership on Darfur, and pressed for U.S. action on Iran's nuclear program. Amb Khalilzad welcomed the proposal to seek an UNGA statement condemning suicide bombings, and committed to re-engaging the Center's representatives once he had identified the tactics necessary for success at the UN. END SUMMARY.

¶2. Rabbi Marvin Hier, Founder and Dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the Center's Associate Dean, Rabbi Meyer May, the Center's Executive Director, and Mark Weitzman, the Director of the Center's Task Force against Hate and Terrorism and the Center's Chief Representative to the United Nations met with Amb. Khalilzad at their request on February 26. Citing their plans to meet with the Secretary-General later on February 26, they said the Center wants the UNGA to convene a special session on terrorism, particularly to condemn suicide bombing. They sought Amb. Khalilzad's support for action in the UNGA and his views on how best to frame the issue for the Secretary-General.

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¶3. The group said that a special session of the General Assembly could focus on the victims of suicide bombings and highlight in particular that more suicide bombings are committed against Muslims than against persons of any other faith. The Center's representatives hoped that focusing the UN on condemning suicide bombings would produce concrete results, as opposed to the General Assembly's efforts to develop a legal definition of terrorism, a contentious political issue unlikely to bear fruit for many years.

¶4. The Wiesenthal Center has taken various measures to heighten awareness of the costs of suicide bombings, they said. Recently, for instance, the Center hosted a conference featuring victims of suicide bombings from various faiths, including Muslims and Hindus. The Center also has placed full-page advertisements in the New York Times, the International Herald Tribune, and Arab newspapers, calling for a UNGA condemnation of suicide bombings. Rabbi Heir questioned why the UN has convened special sessions on various matters of international concern, such as drug trafficking and global warming, but not terrorism.

¶5. Amb. Khalilzad said the Center's idea has merit and that he wanted to give more tactical thought on how best achieve a positive, substantive result through the UN. He also agreed to consult with the Secretary-General on the Center's

proposal. Speculating on possible sources of support for such an initiative, Amb Khalilzad noted that Afghanistan, Iraq, and Algeria, for instance, have suffered from suicide bombing attacks. In that context, Amb. Khalilzad noted that, given the political sensitivities of the subject matter, both the Wiesenenthal Center and the United States Government might need to work behind the scenes and allow other states to spearhead the effort so as not to inadvertently engender political opposition. The Center's representatives clarified that their primary interest was to achieve a concrete result.

They thus said they welcomed Amb Khalilzad's guidance on tactics and are prepared to step back if that was useful.

¶6. The Wiesenenthal Center's representatives also expressed concern about the "Durban II" review conference on racism, calling the first Durban conference "anti-Semitic and anti-American." Stressing that the United States shared such concerns, Amb. Khalilzad said the United States had voted against the UN budget last December because it provided funding for a second conference.

¶7. The Center's representatives also appealed for continued U.S. leadership on Darfur. Amb. Khalilzad responded that the United States is taking the lead to press the UN to do more on Darfur.

¶8. Finally, the Center's representatives sought an update on U.S. efforts to counter Iranian nuclear proliferation. Amb. Khalilzad said the United States hoped the Security Council would adopt a resolution on Friday, although support from Libya, South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam remained in doubt.  
KHALILZAD